

The applicant requests a one-month extension of time up to September 19, 2004 in which to file the present response. A check including the \$110 fee is attached in connection with this request. The attached check also includes the \$172 fee for two additional independent claims. In the event the Examiner finds that additional fees are required, he or she is hereby authorized to charge to our Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Response to Election of Species requirement:

In the Office Action of July 19, 2004, the Examiner has required an election of species which the Examiner lists as Species I, Figure 1; Species II, Figure 2; Species III, Figure 3; Species IV, Figures 4-5; Species V, Figure 6; and Species VI, Figure 7.

In response to the Examiner's requirement, the applicant elects Species VI represented by Figure 7 and directed to the previously presented claims 30-36.

The applicant traverses the requirement for election as represented by the Examiner because each of Figures 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 illustrates an annular sealing unit (150, 160, 350 or 360) including a plurality of sealing rings each shown in Figure 2 or 3 and an annular retaining member (151 or 161) intervening between the sealing rings (153 or 163) and the vacuum casing (110). Each of Figures 6 and 7 illustrates a shaft sealing apparatus equipped with a labyrinth seal unit intervening between the center shaft (240 or 340) and the vacuum chamber (110 or 310). In addition, Figure 4 illustrates a step for preparing the sealing unit (160) having the sealing rings (163, 163) fixedly retained therein, and Figure 5 illustrates a step for installing the sealing unit (160) into the opening (110b) of the vacuum casing (110).

Proposed Amendments to the Claims:

The applicant further requests the entry of the amendments to the claims prior to the examination of the above-identified application.

In the amendments, Claims 37 and 39 are newly added to be directed to the above Species VI represented by Figure 7. The other new claim 38, dependent upon the claim 37, is


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directed to the combination of the species represented by Figures 6 and 7. Support for the amendment can be found in lines 16-18 on page 18 of the specification.

Date: September 17, 2004

Respectfully submitted,



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